

Ezra Kanarick and Zoe Garderet
Tragedy/Drama of the Commons

Goal: Think about social, ethical, and economic implications of utilitarianism through Social Contract Theory and the Tragedy of the Commons, applying them to real-world, modern examples.

I. Warmup Activity

Write in journals and discuss in pairs: Is shelter, safety, and basic sustenance a human right or a privilege?

If it is a right:

- A. Who is responsible for realizing that right?
- B. Do you have an obligation as an individual to help people get and maintain those rights?

II. Social Contract Theory and Utilitarianism speed lesson

- A. Hobbes: Relinquish certain personal rights for “the greater good” and civil rights
- B. Explain utilitarianism

III. Tragedy/Drama of the Commons

- A. Explain the problem using the sheep farm example.
- B. Right to autonomy vs. right to food security
- C. Follow-up Questions:
 1. Sterilization/reproductive regulation of the sheep
 2. How does proximity to the issue affect opinions on the matter? Should the issue directly affect you in order for you to care about it? Should you take any preemptive measures for protection?

IV. Connect to humanitarian crises*

- A. Refugee crises: Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria
- B. Does the U.S. have the obligation to intervene politically? To accept immigrants? To what extent and in what ways?

***Allow the students to make these specific connections on their own: Frame this part as a question (“What modern day situations can you think of that relate to this problem?”)**

